

VZCZCXRO1526
RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLN
RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHSQ #0019 0141347
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 141347Z JAN 08 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY SKOPJE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6883
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE 0148
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
RUEHSQ/USDAO SKOPJE MK
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUESEN/SKOPJE BETA
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3731

UNCLAS SKOPJE 000019

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SCE PFEUFFER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KIRF](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: GROUNDBREAKING AGREEMENT ON JEWISH
PROPERTY RESTITUTION

SUMMARY

11. (SBU) In a groundbreaking agreement with Macedonia's Jewish community concluded December 28, 2007, the Macedonian government (GOM) completed the process of restitution of all heirless Jewish property in the country. Fully satisfied with the decision, the Jewish community is planning to use the 17 million Euros agreed as restitution to complete a Holocaust memorial and art center in Skopje. End summary.

12. (SBU) The Ambassador met with the President of the Macedonian Jewish community, Zdravko Sami, on January 3 to follow up on post's efforts to encourage the GOM to take a more proactive role in resolving the restitution of heirless Jewish property nationalized or otherwise confiscated by previous governments when Macedonia was a part of the former Yugoslavia. Sami confirmed that the Jewish community and the GOM had concluded and signed an agreement on December 28 committing the government to provide 17 million Euros worth of bonds to the local Jewish community as restitution. This amount, in addition to earlier compensation paid or promised to the Jewish community, effectively addresses all of the community's heirless private property claims under current laws.

13. (SBU) The Jewish community estimates that the amount pledged by the government will allow them to complete construction of the Holocaust memorial and an art center (planned for completion in March 2008). Sami believes the community will have sufficient funds left over to create an endowment to maintain the Holocaust center's programming. The GOM will issue denationalization bonds to the Jewish community sometime in the spring of 2008. Those bonds can then be used as collateral to secure a bank loan for completion of the construction.

COMMENT

14. (SBU) This agreement follows the Ambassador's intensive recent lobbying with the Prime Minister and other high-level officials for completion of the Jewish property restitution process. The Macedonian Jewish community and the American Jewish Committee strongly praised the signed agreement, which adequately restitutes all heirless Jewish property in Macedonia. We will continue to monitor the case and make

sure that the agreed-upon issuance of bonds and financial transfers to the Jewish community are completed on time.
MILOVANOVIC